

PIPES OF PAN

NO. III.

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

BY
BLISS CARMAN

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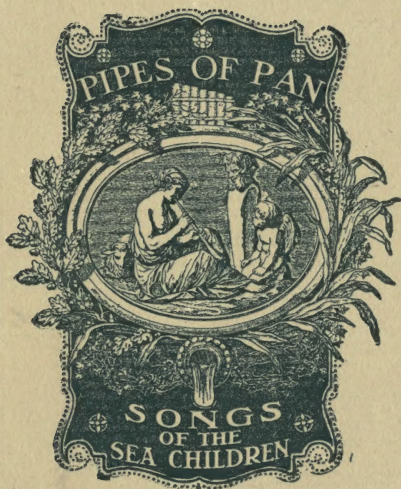
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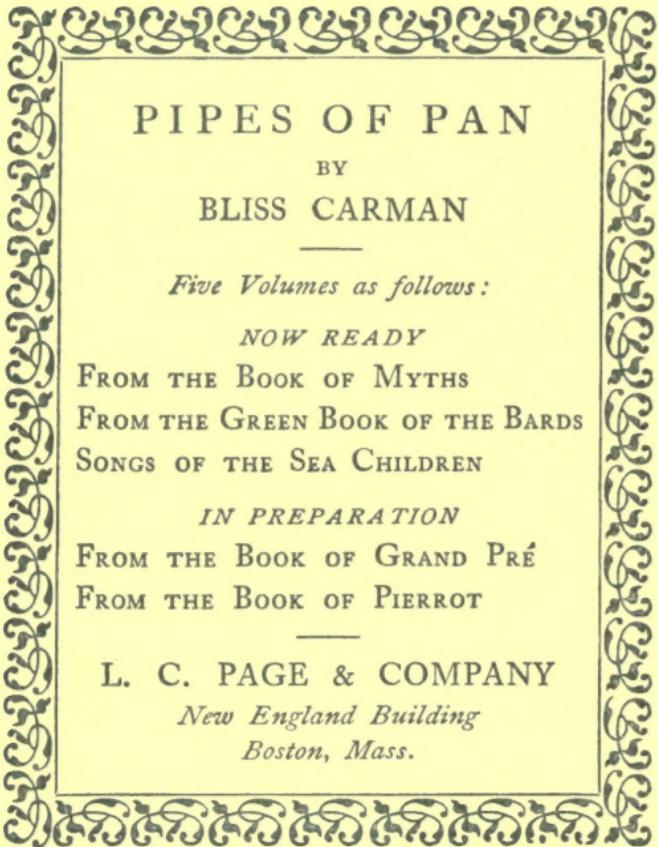
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PIPES OF PAN

BY
BLISS CARMAN

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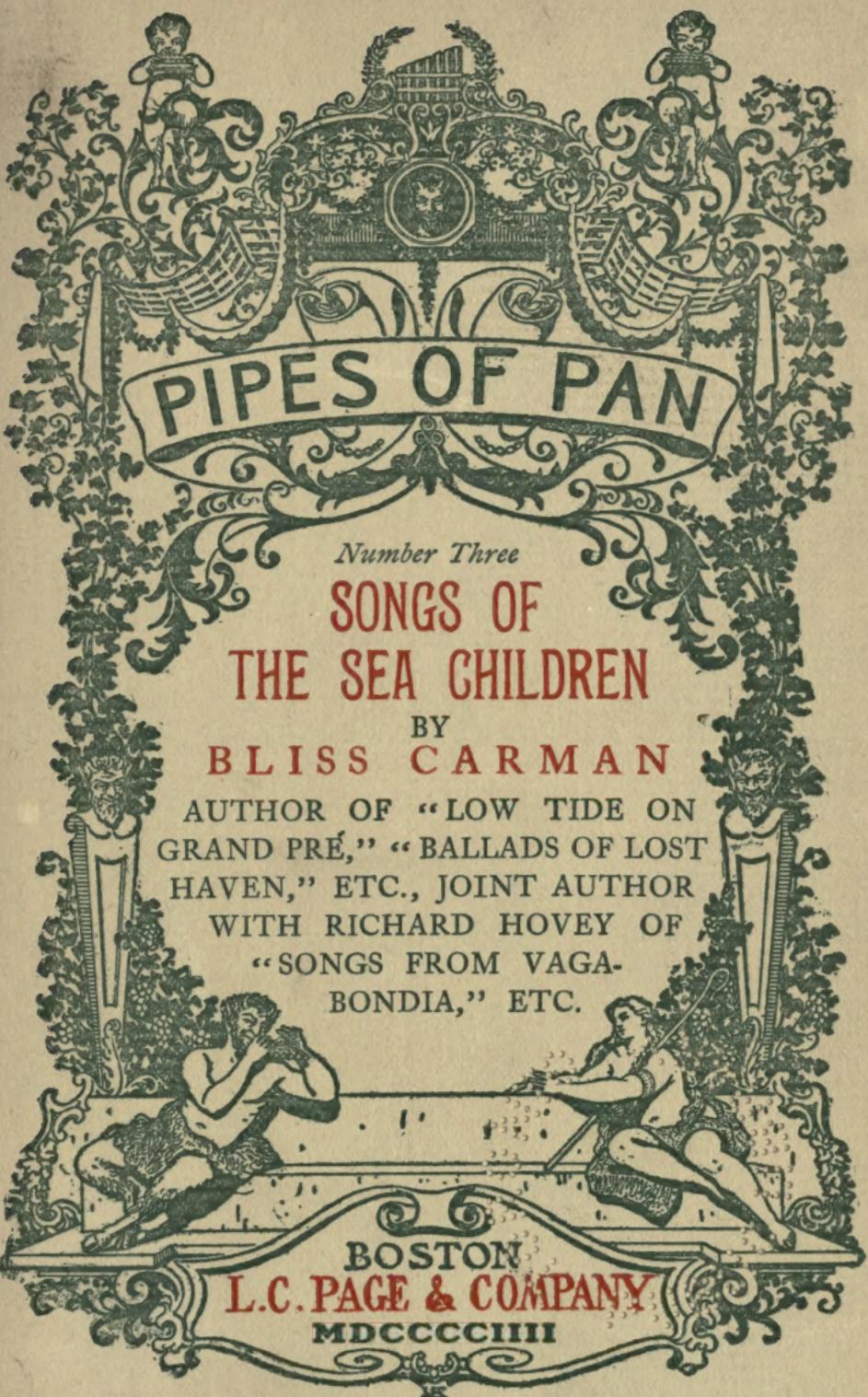
FROM THE BOOK OF MYTHS
FROM THE GREEN BOOK OF THE BARDS
SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

IN PREPARATION

FROM THE BOOK OF GRAND PRÉ
FROM THE BOOK OF PIERROT

L. C. PAGE & COMPANY

*New England Building
Boston, Mass.*



PIPES OF PAN

Number Three

SONGS OF
THE SEA CHILDREN

BY

BLISS CARMAN

AUTHOR OF "LOW TIDE ON
GRAND PRÉ," "BALLADS OF LOST
HAVEN," ETC., JOINT AUTHOR
WITH RICHARD HOVEY OF
"SONGS FROM VAGA-
BONDIA," ETC.

BOSTON
L.C. PAGE & COMPANY
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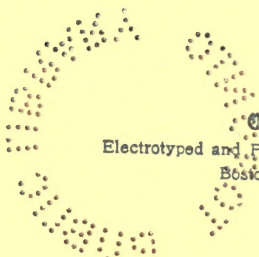
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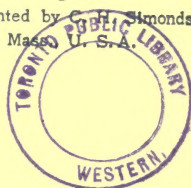
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June 18 1914

TO
James Whitcomb Riley

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PRELUDE.

These are the little songs
The wild sea children sang,
When the first gold arch of light
From rim to zenith sprang;

When all the glad clean joys
Of being came to birth,
Out of the darkling womb
Of the morning of the earth.

And these are the lyric songs
The earthborn children sing,
When wild-wood laughter throngs
The shy bird-throats of spring;

P R E L U D E

When there's not a joy of the heart
But flies like a flag unfurled,
And the swelling buds bring back
The April of the world.

These are the April songs
The vernal children sing,
When the yellow pollen dust
Floats on the stream in spring;

When the swelling streams go down
Through the deep and grassy floors,
And the gold-fish and the turtle
Bask at their river doors.

And these are the innocent songs
The forest children sing,
When the whippoorwill's unrest
Is a pulse in the heart of spring;

P R E L U D E

When the dark of the frail new moon
Is a globe of dim sea green,
And no soul fears what its strange
Sea-memories may mean.

These are the happy songs
The first sea children made,
When the red morning roused them
In the deep forest shade;

When Hillborn said to Seaborn,
"Sweetheart, but thou art fair!"
And the shining silver sea-mist ✓
Made moonstones in her hair. ✓

These are the lilting songs
The dark sea children knew,
When the sands emerged, and the sea
Was a lotus of Indian blue;

P R E L U D E

When, blossom by wind-blown blossom,
Their virginal zones undone,
The world was a wide sunflower
Turning her face to the sun.

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN.

I.

There is a wise Magician,
Who sets a yellow star
To seal the cinders of the night
Within a hollow jar.

And when the jar is broken,
A marvel has been done;
There lies within the rosy dusk
That coal we call the sun.

But more than any wonder
That makes the rose of dawn,
Is this inheritance of joy
My heart is happy on.

II.

The day is lost without thee,
The night has not a star.
Thy going is an empty room
Whose door is left ajar.

Depart: it is the footfall
Of twilight on the hills.
Return: and every rood of ground
Breaks into daffodils.

Thy coming is companioned
By presences of bliss;
The rivers and the little leaves
All know how good it is.

III.

Thou art the sense and semblance
Of things that never were,
The meaning of a sunset,
The tenor of a star.

Thou art the trend of morning,
The burden of June's prime,
The twilight's consolation,
The innocence of time.

Thou art the phrase for gladness
God coined when he was young,
The fare-thee-well to sadness
By stars of morning sung,

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

The lyric revelation
To rally and rebuoy
The darker earth's half sinking
Temerity of joy.

Out of the hush and hearkening
Of the reverberant sea,
Some happier golden April
Might fashion things like thee.

Or if one heart-beat faltered
In oblivion's drum-roll,
That perfect idle moment
Might be thy joyous soul.

And the long waves of sorrow
Will search and find no shore
In all the seas of being,
When thou shalt be no more.

IV.

Thou art the pride and passion
Of the garden where God said,
“ Let us make a man.” To fashion
The beauty of thy head,

The iron æons waited
And died along the hill,
Nor saw the uncreated
Dream of the urging will.

A thousand summers wandered
Alone beside the sea,
And guessed not, though they pondered,
What his design might be.

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

But here in the sun's last hour,
(So fair and dear thou art!)
He shuts in my hand his flower,
His secret in my heart.

V.

In the door of the house of life,
Beside the fabled sea,
I am a harpstring in the wind,
Æolian for thee.

It was a cunning idler
Who strung the even cords
Across the drift of harmonies
Impossible to words.

It was the old Musician,
With nothing else to do,
One April when he felt the stir
Revive him and renew,

Made me thy naught but lover,
A frayed imperfect strand
Reverberant to every note,
Alive beneath thy hand!

But smile, and I am laughter;
Look sorrow, and I mourn —
A spirit from the cave of fears,
Fantastic and forlorn.

Sing low — the world is waiting
Such radiance as thine
To welcome her returning ships
Above the dark sea-line.

Rejoice — I know the cadence,
Thou innocent and glad,
To make of every hillside flower
A dancing Oread.

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

A thing of sense and spirit,
And moods and melody,
I am a harpstring in the wind,
Æolian for thee.

VI.

Love, by that loosened hair,
Well now I know
Where the lost Lilith went
So long ago.

Love, by those starry eyes
I understand
How the sea maidens lure
Mortals from land.

Love, by that welling laugh
Joy claims its own
Sea-born and wind-wayward
Child of the sun.

VII.

Once more in every tree-top
I hear the hollow wind
A-blowing the last remnants
Of winter from the land.

Far down the April morning,
With battle-clang and glee,
The Boreal intruders
Are driven to the sea.

Then softly, buds of scarlet,
Warm rain, and purple wing —
The tattered glad uncumbered
Camp-followers of spring!

VIII.

Under the greening willow
Wanders a golden cry;
Oriole April up in the world
With morning day goes by.

Out of the virgin quiet
Like an awakening sigh,
With the wild, wild heart forever
A journeyer am I.

We are the wind's own brothers,
Sorrow and joy and I;
But thou art the hope of morrows
That shall be by and by.

IX.

Dear, what hast thou to do
With the cold moon,
Free to range, fleet to change,
So far and soon?

Dear, what hast thou to do
With the hoar sea?
Love alone is his own
Eternity.

Dear, what hast thou to do
With anything
In the wide world beside
Joyance and spring?

X.

As sudden winds that break
The fresh face of the sea,
The tinge upon her cheek
Tells what the storm will be.

As purple shadows rise
Up to the setting sun,
Her wonderful grey eyes
Will tell when love is done.

XI.

As down the purple of the night
I watch the flaring meteors race,
The gorgeous Bedouins of the dusk
Making across the glooms of space,

To my fantastic heart's unrest
That would be gay, that would be gone,
They seem like trysting lovers' souls
Too long delayed and hurrying on.

XII.

In the Kingdom of Boötes,
Whose vast cordon none can tell,
Mirac answers to Arcturus,
“All is well!”

What to them are days and seasons,
Storm and triumph, plague and war —
With their large, serene appointments,
Star for star?

In this handbreadth of the midnight,
These heart-confines where we dwell,
I can hear your spirit answer,
“All is well!”

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

What to us is night or morrow,
Or the little pause of death,
In the rhythm of joy we measure
Breath by breath? ✓

XIII.

Look, love, along the low hills
The first stars!
God's hand is lighting the watchfires for us,
To last until dawn.

Hark, love, the wild whippoorwills!
Those weird bars,
Full of dark passion, will pierce the dim forest,
All night, on and on,

Till the overbrimmed bowl of life spills,
And time mars
The one perfect piece of his handcraft, love's
lifetime
From dewrise till dawn.

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

Foolish heart, fearful of ills!

Shall the stars

Require a reason, the birds ask a morrow?

Heed thou love alone!

XIV.

The rain-wind from the East,
So long a wanderer
Beyond the sources of the sun,
Brings back the crocus April and the showers.
A heart upwelling in the forest flowers
Has made them lovers every one.
Who makes the twilight seem to stir
In happy tears released?
There, there, sweetheart!

The night-wind from the West,
The broad eaves of the sky,
Brings back across the orchard hills
The memories of a thousand springs with him;

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

And the white apple valleys in a dream
Listen to the dark whippoorwills.
Is the old burden of their joy
So great they cannot rest?
There, there, sweetheart!

XV.

O purple-black are the wet quince boughs,
Where the buds begin to burn!
And fair enough is Spring's new house,
Made fresh for Love's return.

She has taken him in and locked the door,
And thrown away the key.
When Free-foot finds his Rove-no-more,
What use is liberty?

XVI.

An unseen hand went over the hill,
And lit the cresset stars,
And below the summer sea was strewn
With mysterious nenuphars.

The little wind of twilight came
With the gladdest of words to me,
"The tide is full, the night is fair,
And Her window waits for thee!"

XVII.

The very sails are singing
A song not of the wind;
A fire dance is creaming
Our wake that runs behind.

In all the shining splendid
White moonflower of the sea,
There's not a runnel sleeping
For ecstasy of thee.

XVIII.

Where the blue comes down to the brine,
And the brine goes up to the blue,
It's shine, shine, shine,
The whole day through,
The whole summer day long, dear.

Till the sun like a harbour buoy,
Is riding afloat in the west,
And it's joy, joy, joy,
For the place of his rest,
The haven of No-more-fear.

Then the stars come out on the sea,
To dance on the purple floor.
Their Master has turned the key
In the silver door,
And my heart's delight draws near.

XIX.

As if the sea's eternal rote
Might cease to set remembrance wild,
The breezy hair, the lyric throat
Were given to the surf-born child.

And the great forest found a voice
For her along the brookside brown,
That bids the purple dusk rejoice,
And croons the golden daylight down.

XX. ✓

O wind and stars, I am with you now ;
And ports of day, Good-by !
When my captain Love puts out to sea,
His mariner am I.

I set my shoulder to the prow,
And launch from the pebbly shore.
The tide pulls out, and hints of time
Blow in from the cool sea floor.

My sheering sail is a swift white wing
Crowding the gloom with haste ;
I scud through the large and solemn world,
And skim the wan grey waste.

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

O stars and wind, be with me now ;
And ports of night, draw near !
No sooner the longed for seamark shines,
Than the very dark grows dear.

XXI.

All the zest of all the ages
Shimmers in my sea-bird's wing,
Flickering above the surges
Of the sea.

All the quiet of the ages
Slumbers in my sea-bird's wing,
Where it settles down the verges
Of the sea.

All the questing soul's behesting
Pent and freed in one white wing,
Joying there above the dirges
Of the sea.

Be thou, sweetheart, such a sweetheart!
All the valour of the spring
Crowds thy pulses with the urges
Of the sea;

Till this drench of joy, thou sweetheart,
Fills the spaces of the spring,
And the large fresh night emerges
From the sea.

XXII.

Eyes like the blue-green
Shine of the sea,
Where the swift shadows run,
Whose soul is free.

Shimmer of sunlight,
Shadow of gloom,
Wayward as ecstasy,
Solemn as doom.

Triumph, transplendour,
Joy through and through,
Till the soul wonders what
Sense next may do.

Hair like the blown grass
Brown on the hill,
Where the wide wandering
Wind has his will.

Spirit, the nomad,
Whither to wend,
Knows not and fears not,
To the world's end.

Seadusk or Dawnbright
Name the earth's child,
Like the wind, like the sea,
Virginal wild.

XXIII.

"Crimson bud, crimson bud,
How come you here,
Daring the upper world,
Blithe without fear?"

"Goldy plume, goldy plume,
Ages ago,
Came to my House of Dark
One through the snow."

"Crimson bud, crimson bud,
What was the word,
Down in the frozen earth,
Sleeping, you heard?"

“ Goldy plume, goldy plume,
Deep in the mould,
Somebody whispered me,
‘ Budkin, be bold! ’ ”

“ Crimson bud, crimson bud,
What was his name —
Taught you such valour
And girt you with flame? ”

“ Ah, fellow wayfarer,”
Whispered the gloom,
“ When they shall question, say,
Love bade me come! ”

XXIV.

We wandered through the soft spring days,
And heard the flowers
Talking among themselves of joys
That were not ours.

Till April in a softening mood
Faltered a word
The pretty gossips of the wood
Had scarcely heard.

But somehow you, you caught the lilt
Of that wild speech
The tiny tribesmen found occult
Beyond their reach.

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

Now when the rainman walks the field,
And robin sings,
I hark to promises that hold
A thousand springs.

XXV.

You pipers in the swales,
Tune up your reedy flutes,
And blow and blow to bring me back
My little girl in spring!

Take all the world beside,
And flute it far away
For less than nought, but give me back
One sleepless night in spring.

XXVI.

To-night I hear the rainbirds
Piercing the silver gloom;
The scent of the sea-blown lilacs
Wanders across my room.

Caught in their wake I follow
The drift of memory;
Once more the summer twilight
Settles upon the sea.

I shut my eyes and see you
Under the lilacs stand,
While the soft mists of sea-rain
Are blowing in to land.

Your little hands steal upward,
Our fingers interlace;
And through the driving sea-dark
I feel your burning face.

One little hour of heaven
Lost in a single kiss;
And then we two forever
The castaways of bliss.

To-night the scent of lilacs
Comes up to me again,
And ghosts of buried summers
Walk with the lonely rain.

But ah, what roof-tree shelters
To-night the dear black head?
Only the sea wind answers —
And leaves of the word unsaid.

XXVII.

Lord of the vasty tent of heaven,
Who hast to thy saints and sages given
A thousand nights with their thousand stars,
And the star of faith for a thousand years,

Grant me, only a foolish rover
All thy beautiful wide world over,
A thousand loves in a thousand days,
And one great love for a thousand years.

XXVIII.

In the cool of dawn I rose;
Life lay there from hill to hill
In the core of a blue pearl,
As it seemed, so deep and still.

Not a word the mountains said
Of the day that was to be,
As I crossed them, till you came
At the sunrise back with me.

Then we heard the whitethroat sing,
And the world was left behind.
A new paradise arose
Out of his untarnished mind.

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

The brown road lay through the wood,
And the forest floor was spread
For our footing with the fern,
And the cornel berries red.

There the woodland rivers sang;
Not a sorrow touched their glee,
Dancing up the yellow sun,
From the purple mountain sea.

Towns and turbulence and fame
Were as fabled things that lay
Through the gateway of the notch,
Long ago and far away.

There we loitered and went on,
Where the roadside berries grew;
Earth with all its joy once more
Was made over for us two.

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

And at last a meaning filled
The round morning fair and good,
Waited for a thousand years,
There was no more solitude.

XXIX.

Up from the kindled pines,
Lo, the lord Sun!
What shall his children find
When day is done?

Ere thy feet follow him
Over the sea,
Love, turn thy glorious
Eyes once to me!

High in the burning noon,
Lo, the lord Sun
Sleeps, with his hand slack,
His girdle undone.

Ere thy feet follow him
Over the hill,
Love, lace thy heart to mine,
Time has stood still.

Down by the valley-night
Sings the great sea;
Over the mountain rim
Day walks for thee.

Ere thy feet follow him
Into far lands,
Love, lift thy mouth to me
Up through thy hands!

Well do they journey
Who joy as they go;
Hear his hills whispering,
"So, it is so."

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

Ere thy feet follow him
Down to the shade,
Love, loose thy zone to me,
Mistress and maid!

Down to the kindling pines,
Lo, the lord Sun
Goes unreluctant
And day is done.

XXX.

The skiey shreds of rain
Are all blown loose again,
And bright among the dripping chestnut boles
Whistle the orioles.

As if wise Nature knew
The finest thing to do,
And touched her forestry, supremely done,
With these few flakes of sun.

To-night by the June sea
You are come back to me,
Through all the mellow dark from hill to hill
That gladdens and grows still;

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

As though wise Nature guessed
Her love joys were the best,
When down the darkling spaces of desire
She sent your song and fire.

XXXI.

On the meridian of the night
Alcar the Tester marks high June;
Arcturus knows his zenith fame;
No grass-head sleeps upon the dune.

And up from the southeastern sea,
Antares, the red summer star,
Brings back the ardours of the earth,
Like fire opals in a jar:

The frail and misty sense of things
Beyond mortality's ado,
The soft delirium of dream,
And joy pale virgins never knew.

XXXII.

Love, lift your longing face up through the rain!
In the white drench of it over the hills,
Blurring remembrance and quieting pain,
Stretch the strong hands of the sea.

Love, lift your longing face up through the rain!
In the bleak rote of it through the far hills,
Rhythmed to joy and untarnished of pain,
Calls the great heart of the sea.

XXXIII.

Swing down, great sun, swing down,
And beat at the gates of day,
To open and let thee forth!
I would not have thee stay.

Swing up, dear stars, and shine
Over the baths of the sea!
To-night, my beautiful one
Will open her arms for me.

XXXIV.

The world is a golden calyx,
A-swing in the blooth of time,
Where floret to floret ripens
And the starry blossoms rhyme.

Thou art the fair seed vessel
Waiting all day for me,
Who ache with the golden pollen
The night will spill for thee.

XXXV.

Eyes like summer after sundown,
Hands like roses after dew,
Lyric as a blown rose garden
The wind wanders through.

Swelling breasts that bud to crimson,
Hair like cobwebs after dawn,
And the rosy mouth wind-rifled
When the wind is gone.

XXXVI.

The sun is lord of a manor fair,
And the earth his garden old,
Whose dewy beds where he walks at morn
Flower by flower unfold.

When he goes at night and leaves the stars
Lit in the trees to shine,
Blossom by blossom the flowerheads sleep —
And a rosy head by mine.

XXXVII.

In God's blue garden the flowers are cold,
As you tell them over star by star,
Sirius, Algol, pale Altair,
Lone Arcturus, and Algebar.

In love's red garden the flowers are warm,
As I count them over and kiss them by,
From the sultry royal rose-red mouth
To the last carnation dusk and shy.

XXXVIII.

First by her starry gaze that falls
Aside, as if afraid to know
The stronger self who stirs and calls,
I think she came from a land of snow.

Then by her mood that melts to mine
Her body and her soul's desire,
Under the shifting forest shine,
I think she came from a land of fire.

XXXIX.

The alchemist who throws his worlds
In the round crucible of the sun,
Has laid our bodies in the forge
Of love to weld them into one.

The hypnotist who waves his hand
And the pale streamers walk the night,
A moment for our souls unbars
The lost dominions of delight.

XL.

Thy mouth is a snow apple,
Thy tongue a rosy melon core,
Thy breasts are citrons odorous of the East.
I know that nursery tale of Eden now,
Where God prepared the feast
Beneath the bow.
I ask no more.

The apple-trees have whispered
The only word I listened for
Through all the legends babbled in my ears.
I know what manner of unbitten fruit
The first man took with fears
And found so sweet.
I ask no more.

XLI.

As orchards in an apple land,
That whiten to the moon of May,
Hear the first rainbird's ecstasy
Peal from the dark hills far away;

The wintry spaces of my soul,
Snowed under by the drift of time,
Feel immortality begin
As your long kisses surge and climb.

XLII.

Noon on the marshes and noon on the hills,
And joy in the white sail that shivers and fills.

Gold are the grain lands, and gold is the sea,
And gold is my little love maid to me.

XLIII.

Berrybrown, Berrybrown, give me your hands!
Here in the bracken shade will we not well
Wring the warm summer world dry of its honey?
God made a heaven before He made hell.

Berrybrown, Berrybrown, give me your eyes;
Let their shy quivering rapture and deep
Melt as they merge in mine melting above them!
God made surrender before He made sleep.

Berrybrown, Berrybrown, give me your mouth,
Till all is done 'twixt a breath and a breath!
Naught shall undo the one joy-deed for ever,
God made desire before He made death.

XLIV.

Wait for me, Cherrychild, when the blue dusk
Falls from the silent star-spaces and fills
With utter peace the great heart of the hills,
Child, Cherrychild! -

Call to me, Cherrychild, when the blue dusk
First throbs to passion among the dark hills,
In the brown throats of the lone whippoorwills,
Child, Cherrychild!

Come to me, Cherrychild, in the blue dusk!
Forlorn and loverless as the wild sea,
Long have I lain alone, longing for thee,
Child, Cherrychild.

XLV.

Summer love, open your eyes to me now!
June's on the mountain and day's at the door.
Time shall turn back for us one crimson hour,
Ere the white seraph winds walk the sea floor.

Summer heart, open your arms to me now!
Beautiful wonder-eyed spirit's home, here
With the eternal ache quenched in the bliss,
One golden minute outmeasures a year.

Sweet heaven! Open your arms to me now!
There, dearest body, cease trembling, lie still!
Joy, how the June birds are shivered with song!
And see, the first shreds of dawn over the hill.

XLVI.

Through what strange garden ran
The sultry stream whereon
This languorous nenuphar of love could grow?
Such melting ardours spending to the moon,
From swoon to swoon!

My wondrous moonflower white,
Outspread in the warm night,
Tinged with a rosy tint, a golden glow,
And fervours of enchantment it must hide
Till daylight died.

It lies so soft and fond,
Wilted in my hot hand,

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

That was so dewy fresh an hour ago.

"Can life be, then," my soul is pondering,

"So frail a thing?"

And all because I laid

The snowy petals wide;

Having heard tell, yet longing still to know,

What sweet things youth might barter ignorance
for,

Once and no more.

XLVII.

Let the red dawn surmise
What we shall do,
When this blue starlight dies
And all is through.

If we have loved but well
Under the sun,
Let the last morrow tell
What we have done.

XLVIII.

A breath upon my face,
A whisper at my ear,
Filling this leafy place,
Tell me love is here.

The sea-gloom of her eyes,
The apples of her breast,
The shadows where she lies,
A-tremble or at rest,

The little rosy knees,
The beech-brown of her hair —
A thousand things like these
Tell me love is fair.

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

The clinging of her kiss,
Her heart that looks beyond,
The joys she will not miss,
Tell me love is fond.

And when I am away,
A weary dying fall,
Haunting the wind by day,
Tells me love is all.

XLIX.

I was a reed in the stilly stream,
Heigh-ho!
And thou my fellow of moveless dream,
Heigh-lo.

Hardly a word the river said,
As there we bowed him a listless head:

Only the yellowbird pierced the noon;
And summer died to a drowsier swoon,

Till the little wind of night came by,
With the little stars in the lonely sky,

And the little leaves that only stir,
When shiest wood-fellows confer.

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

It shook the stars in their purple sphere,
And laid a frost on the lips of fear.

It woke our slumbering desire,
As a breath that blows a mellow fire,

And the thrill that made the forest start,
Was a little sigh from our happy heart.

This is the story of the world,
Heigh-ho!
This is the glory of the world,
Heigh-lo.

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

L.

I was the west wind over the garden,
Out of the twilit marge and deep;
You were the sultry languorous flower,
Famished and filled and laid to sleep.

I was the rover bee, and you —
With the hot red mouth where a soul might
 drown,
And the buoyant soul where a man might
 swim —
You were the blossom that drew me down.

LI. ✓

A touch of your hair, and my heart was furled;
A drift of fragrance, and noon stood still;
All of a sudden the fountain there
Had something to whisper the sun on the hill.

Rose of the garden of God's desire,
Only the passionate years can prove
With sorrow and rapture and toil and tears
The right of the soul to the kingdom of love.

LII.

In the land of kisses
The very winds were stirred
To mortal speech. But this is
The only tale I heard.

In the land of kisses
Your mouth is a red bloom,
Aching to know the blisses
That perish and consume.

In the land of kisses
My mouth is a red moth
Searching in the dusk. And this is
The rapture for us both.

LIII.

I think the sun when he turns at night,
And lays his face against the sea's,
Must have such thoughts as these.

I think the wind, when he wakes at dawn,
Must wonder, seeing hill by hill,
That they can sleep so still.

LIV.

I see the golden hunter go,
With his hound star close at heel,
Through purple fallows above the hill,
When the large autumn night is still
And the tide of the world is low.

And while to their unwearied quest
The sister Pleiads pass,
That seventh loveliest and lost
Desire of all the orient host
Is here upon my breast.

LV.

You old men with frosty beards,
I am wiser than you all;
I have seen a fairer page
Than Belshazzar's wall.

You young men with scornful lips,
I am stronger than you all;
I have sown the Cadmian field
Where no shadows fall.

For a woman yesterday
Loved me, body, soul, and all.
Saints will lift their crowns to me
At the Judgment Call.

LVI.

It was the tranquil hour
Of earth's expectancy,
When we lay on the Wishing Sands
Beside the sleeping sea.

We saw the scarlet moon rise
And light the pale grey land;
We heard the whisper of the tide,
The sighing of the sand.

I felt the ardent flutter
Your heart gave for delight;
You knew how earth is glad and hushed
Under the tent of night.

We dreamed the dream of lovers,
And told our dream to none;
And all that we desired came true,
Because we wished as one.

LVII.

The mountain ways one summer
Saw joy and life go past,
When we who fared so lonely
Were hand in hand at last.

Till over us the pine woods
Their purple shadows cast,
And the tall twilight laid us
Hot mouth to mouth at last.

O hills, beneath your slumber,
Or pines, below your blast,
Make room for your two children,
Cold cheek to cheek at last!

LVIII.

Poppy, you shall live forever
With the crimson of her kiss,
Through a summer day undreamed of
In a land like this.

Once I bartered with Oblivion:
For the crimson of her kiss
I would give a thousand morrows
Of a day like this.

But I was a foolish buyer;
For the crimson of her kiss
Woke me, and I heard the wind say,
“Nevermore like this!”

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

Poppy, you shall sleep forever
With the crimson of her kiss
Through the centuries, undreamed of
In a rhyme like this.

LIX.

I loved you when the tide of prayer
Swept over you, and kneeling there
In the pale summer of the stars,
You laid your cheek to mine.

I loved you when the auroral fire,
Like the world's veriest desire,
Burned up, and as it touched the sea,
You laid your limbs to mine.

I loved you when you stood tiptoe
To say farewell, and let me go
Into the night from your laced arms,
And laid your mouth to mine.

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

And I shall love you on that day
The wind comes over the sea to say
Your golden name upon men's mouths,
And mix your dust with mine.

LX.

Once of a Northern midnight,
By dike and mountainside,
With fleeces for her habit,
The moon went forth to ride

Up from the ocean caverns,
Where ancient memories bide,
Returning with his secret
We heard the muttering tide.

But fear was not upon you;
Your woman's arms were wide;
The world's poor shreds and tatters
Of mumming laid aside.

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

The sea-rote for our rubic,
Our ritual and guide,
There was a virgin wedding
Whose vows no priest supplied.

And there until the dawn-wind
Up from the marshes sighed,
Whispered among the aspens,
Shivered and passed and died,

Our scene-shifter the moonlight,
Our orchestra the tide,
I was a prince of fairy,
You were a prince's bride.

LXI.

The forest leaves were all asleep,
The yellow stars were on the hill,
The roving winds were all away,
Only the tide was restless still,

When I awoke. My chamber dim
Was flooded by the cool, sweet night,
And in the hush I seemed aware
Of premonitions of delight.

Who called me lightly as I slept?
Who touched my forehead with soft hands?
Who summoned me without a sound
Back from the vague, mysterious lands?

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

It must have been my sleepless heart
Knocking upon his prison door,
To bid old Reason have a care
Lest Joy should pass and come no more.

X

LXII.

There sighed along the garden path
And through the open door a stir;
'Twas not the rustle of the corn,
Nor yet the whisper of the fir.

There passed an Eastern odour, fraught
With the delirium of sense;
'Twas not the attar of the rose,
Nor the carnation's redolence.

Then came a glimmering of white —
The drench of sheer diaphanous lawn,
More palpable than light of stars,
And more delectable than dawn.

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

The Paphian curve from throat to waist,
From waist to knee, then lost again,
Told me how beauty such as hers
Spreads like a madness among men.

LXIII.

And then I knew the first vague bliss
That swept through Lilith like strange fire,
Consuming all her loveliness
With one imperious desire,

When in the twilight she beheld,
Through the green apple shades obscure,
The Lord God moulding from the dust
Her splendid virgin paramour.

I knew what aching shudder ran
Through the dark bearers, file on file,
When Pharaoh's daughter went to merge
Her peerless beauty in the Nile;

What slumbering deliciousness
Awoke beside the Dorian stream
When the young prince from over sea
Broke on the lovely Spartan's dream;

And all the fervour and desire,
The raptures and the ecstasies,
Of Aucassin and Nicollette,
Of Abelard and Héloïse,

And all the passionate despair,
So bravely borne for many a year,
Of Tristram and the dark Iseult,
Of Launcelot and Guinevere!

LXIV.

I knew, by that diviner sense
Which wakes to beauty sweet and lone,
Once more beneath the moonlit boughs
Astarte had unloosed her zone;

Immortal passion, fair and wild,
Remembering her joys of yore,
Had taken on the human guise
To glad one mortal lover more.

LXV.

A moon-white moth against the moon,
A sea-blue raindrop in the sea,
A grain of pollen on the air,
This little virgin soul might be.

As if a passing breath of wind
Should stir the poplars in the night,
Her wondrous spirit woke from sleep,
And shivered with unknown delight.

As if a sudden garden door
Should open in a granite wall,
She trembled at the brink of joy,
So great and so ephemeral.

LXVI.

What is it to remember?
How white the moonlight poured into the room,
That summer long ago!
How still it was
In that great solemn midnight of the North,
A century ago!

And how I wakened trembling
At soft love-whispers warm against my cheek,
And laughed it was no dream!
Then far away,
The troubled, refluent murmur of the sea,
A sigh within a dream!

LXVII.

She had the fluttering eyelids
Like petals of a rose;
I had the wisdom never learned
From any musty prose.

She had the melting ardour
That hesitates yet dares;
And I had youthful valour's look,
That is so like despair's.

She had the tender bearing
Of daffodils in spring;
And I had sense enough to know
Love is a fleeting thing.

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

She had the heart of tinder;
I had the lips of flame;
And neither of us ever heard
Procrastination's name.

She had the soft demeanour,
Discreet as any nun's;
And each of us has all the joy
God gives his foolish ones.



LXVIII.

The land lies full, from brim to brim
Of the great smoke-blue mountains' rim,
Of yellow autumn and red sun.
A giant in content, the day
Idles the solemn hours away
To dreamland one by one.

Life is the dominance of good,
And love the ecstasy of mood,
Your hand in my hand says to me.
Yet, somewhere in the waste between
Being and sense, I hear a threne
Wash like the dirging sea.

LXIX.

In the blue opal of a winter noon,
When all the world was a white floor
Lit by the northern sun,
I saw with naked eyes a midday star
Burn on like gleaming spar,
Where all its fellows of the mighty dusk
Had perished one by one.

When I shall have put by the vagrant will,
And down this rover's twilight road
Emerge into the sun,
Be thou my only sheer and single star,
Known, named, and followed far,
When all these Jack-o'-lantern hopes and fears
Have perished one by one!

LXX.

Far hence in the infinite silence
How we shall learn and forget,
Know and be known, and remember
Only the name of regret?

Sown in that ample quiet,
We shall break sheath and climb,
Seeds of a single desire
In the heart of the apple of time.

We shall grow wise as the flowers,
And know what the bluebirds sing,
When the hands of the grasses unravel
The wind in the hollows of spring.

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

And out of the breathless summer
The aspen leaves will stir,
At your low sweet laugh to remember
The imperfect things we were.

LXXI.

Of the whole year, I think, I love
The best that time we used to call
The Little Summer of All Saints,
About the middle of the fall,

Because there fell the golden days
Of that gold year beside the sea,
When first I had you at heart's will,
And you had your whole will of me.

It is the being's afternoon,
The second summer of the soul,
When spirits find a way to reach
Beyond the sense and its control.

Then come the firmamental days,
The underseason of the year,
When God himself, being well content,
Takes time to whisper in our ear.

Sweetheart, once more by every sign
Of blade and shadow, it must be
The Little Summer of All Saints
In the red Autumn by the sea.

LXXII.

At night upon the mountains
The magic moon goes by,
And stops at every threshold
With lure and mystery.

And then my lonely fancy
Can bide content no more,
But through an autumn country
Must search from door to door,

Till in a quiet valley,
Under a quiet sky,
Is found the one companion
To bid the world good-by.

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

And once again at moonrise
We wander hand in hand,
With the last grief forgotten,
Through an enchanted land.

LXXIII.

Once more the woods grow crimson,
Once more the year burns down,
Once more my feet come home
To the little seaboard town.

Once more I learn desire
Prevails but to endure,
And the heart springs to meet
Your hand-touch — and be sure.

LXXIV.

Once when the winds of spring came home
From the far countries where they roam,
I heard them tell
Of things I could not understand,
And strange adventures in a land
Where all was well.

I do not wonder any more
What Autumn at his open door
Is dreaming of;
I am so happy to have done
With all the things underneath the sun
Save only love.

LXXV.

The world is swimming in the light,
Sheer as a bubble green and gold.
On the purpureal autumn walls
Once more time's rubric is unrolled.

As if the voice of the blue sea
Sufficed for summer's utmost speech,
But now the very hills must help
And lift their heart to the lyric reach.

Scarlet, diaphanous and glad,
The valiant message waves and burns,
The elemental cry that lurks
Deep as the cold heart of the Norns.

LXXVI.


When the October wind stole in
To wake me in my chamber cool,
With dancing sunlight on the wall,
From the still vestibule

Fluttered a sound like rustling leaves,
Or the just-heard departing stir
Of silk, a hint of presence gone,
A waft of lavender.

I saw upon my arms strange marks,
Traced when my eyes were unaware,
Like petal-stains of some green rose
Or faint kiss-bruises there;

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

And wondered, as there came the sad
Eternal whisper of the sea,
Which one of all my pale dead loves
Had spent the night with me.



LXXVII.

The red frost came with his armies
And camped by the sides of the sea.
The maples and the oaks took on
His gorgeous livery.

They dyed their tents a madder,
Alizarin and brown,
And dipped their banners in the sun
To give their joy renown.

And lo, when twilight sobered
Their dauntless cinnabars,
Along the outposts of the sea
The watch-fires of the stars!

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

And I for love of roving
Am listed with the king,
Because I knew the password,
"Joy is the only thing!"

LXXVIII.

Dearest, in this so golden fall,
When beauty aches with her own bliss,
One thought the pause to my desire
And my small consolation is.

I am a child. A thistle seed
On the boon wind is more than I,
Yet will the hand that sows the hills
Have care of me too when I die.

When I who love thee without words
Sink as a foam-bell in the sea,
One who has no regard for fame
Will neither have contempt for me.

LXXIX.

Her hair was crocus yellow,
Her eyes were crocus blue,
Her body was the only gate
Of paradise I knew.

Her hands were velvet raptures,
Her mouth a velvet bliss;
Not Lilith in the garden had
So wonderful a kiss.

To know her was to banish
Reason for once and all.
Her voice was like a silver door
Set in a scarlet wall.

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

For when she said, "I love you,"
It was as when the tide
Yearns for the naked moonlight,
An unreluctant bride.

And when she said, "Ah, leave me,"
It was as when the sea
Sighs at the ebb, or a spent wind
Dies in the aspen tree.

LXXX.

Out of the dust that bore thee,
What wonder walking came, —
What beauty like blown grasses,
What ardour like still flame!

What patience of the mountains,
What yearning of the sea,
What far eternal impulse
Endowed the world with thee?

A reed within the river,
A leaf upon the bough,
What breath of April ever
Was half so dear as thou?

LXXXI.

Remnants of this soul of mine,
This same self that once was me,
Flock and gather and grow one,
Whole once more at thought of thee.

Never yet was such a love,
So supremely fond as thou;
Never mortal lover yet
So beloved as thine is now.

I a foam-head in the sea,
Thou the tide to lift and run;
I a sombre-crested hill,
Thou the purple light thereon.

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

Tide may ebb and light may fail,
But not love's sincerity, —
More enduring than the sun,
More compelling than the sea.

LXXXII.

What is this House at the End of the World,
Where the sun leaves off and the snow begins,
And the drift of the grey sea spins?

O this is the house where I was born,
At the world's far edge one April day,
Within sound of the white sea spray.

The place is lone, where the hills recede,
And the sea slopes over the world's far side,
And nothing moves but the tide, —

The moaning tide and the silent sun,
The wind and the stars and the Northern light,
Changing the watch by night.

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

And of all the travellers who questioned me,
Why I make my home in so quiet a land,
Not a soul could understand.

Till the day you came with love in your eyes,
And asked no more than the sun on the wall,
Yet understood it all.

And my house has been filled to overflow
With beauty and laughter and peace since then,
And joys of the world of men.

LXXXIII.

A woman sat by the hearth,
And a man looked out at the door.

“O lover, I hear a sound
As of approaching storm,
When the sea makes in from the north
With thunder and chafing and might,
And trundles the quaking ground.”

“It is not the sea you hear.
The ice in the river is loosed;
You hear its grinding mills
Wearing the winter away,
And the grist of grief and cold

Shall soon be the meal of joy.
O heart of me, April is here!"

"O lover, I hear a sigh
As of the boding wind
In the murmurous black pines,
Or a stir as of beating wings
When the fleeing curlews fly."

"It is not the wind's great hum;
The bees in the willow blooms,
All golden-dusted now,
Sing in their chantry loft
As when earth the immortal was young,
Busy with ardour and joy.
O heart of mine, April is come!"

"O lover, my heart aches sore;
My hands would fondle your hair,
My cheek be laid to your cheek;

A strange new wild great word
Knocks at my heart's closed door."

"Who is not a learner now?
We endure, and seasons change,
And the heart grows great and strange
With the beauty of earth and time.
Our lives unfold and get free,
As the streams and the creatures do,
To range through the April now."

Like a gold spring-flower in his arms,
She stood by the open door.

LXXXIV.

The willows are all golden now,
And grief is past and olden now;
To the wild heart
There comes a start
Will help it and embolden now.

The birch tips are all slender now;
The April light is tender now;
And the soft skies
Are calm and wise
With vision of new splendour now.

The streets are full of gladness now, —
Forget their look of sadness now;
While up and down
The flowery town
Comes back the old spring madness now.

LXXXV.

O wonder of all wonders,
The winter time is done,
And to the low, bleak, bitter hills
Comes back the melting sun!

O wonder of all wonders,
The soft spring winds return,
And in the sweeping gusts of rain
The glowing tulips burn!

O wonder of all wonders,
That tenderness divine,
Bearing a woman's name, should knock
At this poor door of mine!

LXXXVI.

This is the time of the golden bough,
The April ardour, the mystic fire,
And the soft wind up from the South,
Lingering, rainy, and warm,
Dissolving sorrow and bidding new life aspire, —
New spirit take form, —
Through the waking green earth now.

This is the time of the golden tress,
The heaving heart and the shining glance,
And the little head that bows
Meekly to love at last.
Then two behold the flowery world in a trance
Through the spring's new vast
Of sunshine and tenderness.

LXXXVII.

When spring comes up the slope of the grey old
 sea,

Like a green galleon,
With joy in her wake, with light on her sails,
What will she bring to us, my Yvonne?

The long, sweet lisp and drench of the sweetness
 of rain,

The strong, glad youth of the sun,
And a touch of the madness that makes men wise
With the wisdom of lovers, my Yvonne.

LXXXVIII. ✓

Now spring comes up the world, sweetheart,
What shall we find to do?
The hills grow purple in the rain,
The sea is gold and blue;

The door is open to the sun,
The window to the sky;
The odour of the cherry bough,
A freighted dream, goes by;

The spruces tell the southwest wind
Where the white windflowers are;
The brooks are babbling in the dusk
To one great yellow star;

In all the April-coloured land,
Where glints and murmurs stray,
There's not a being that draws breath
But will go mad to-day —

Go mad with piercing ecstasy,
Afoot, afloat, awing,
And wild with all the aching sweet
Delirium of spring.

Now April fills the world with love,
There's not a thing to do
But to be happy all night long,
Then glad the whole day through.

LXXXIX.

The rain on the roof is your laughter;
The wind in the eaves is your sigh;
The sun on the hills is your gladness
In Spring going by.

The sea to its uttermost morning,
Gold-fielded, unfrontiered and blue,
Is the light and the space and the splendour
My heart holds for you.

XC.

Sweetheart, sweetheart, delay no more,
Nor in this prosy street abide!
The fairy coach is at the door;
The fairy ship is on the tide.

For I have built of golden dreams,
And furnished with delight for thee,
And lit with wondrous starry beams,
A fairy place over sea.

Then, footman, up! Good horses, speed!
Then, lads, aboard and make all sail!
The wind is fair, the cable freed;
Now what can all the world avail?

XCI.

Out of the floor of the greenish sea
Flowers the scarlet moon,
Thrusting the tip of her budding lip
Through its watery sheath in the waiting June.

Out of the grey of forgotten things
My heart shall arise at full,
And illumine space to find your face
By a love-light quiet and wonderful.

XCII.

There's not a little boat, sweetheart,
That dances on the tide, —
There's not a nodding daisy-head
In all the meadows wide, —

In all the warm green orchards,
Where bright birds sing and stray,
There's not a whistling oriole
So glad as I this day.

XCIH. 

She said, " In all the purple hills,
Where dance the lilies blue,
Where all day long the springing larks
Make fairy-tales come true,

" Where you can lie for hours and watch
The unfathomable sky,
There's not a breath of all the June
That's half so glad as I!"

XCIV.

I saw the ships come wing by wing
Up from the golden south with spring;
And great was the treasure they had in hold
Of food and raiment and gems and gold,
The loot and barter of many lands
Brought home by daring and hardy hands.

For love is the only seed that sows
The waste of the sea which no man knows.

My sailing thoughts came back to me
From faring over the great dream sea;
And every one was laden deep
With riches of memory to keep,

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

Laughter and joy and the smooth delight
Of the little friend and the starry night.

For love is the only seed that sows
The waste of the heart which no man knows.

XCV.

Up and up, they all come up
Out of the noon together,
The flowering sails on the slope of the sea
In the white spring weather.

In and in, they all draw in —
A streaming flock together —
From the lone and monstrous waste of sea
By a single tether.

Home, come home, they all make home
In a racing fleet together —
The little white wishes I sent to you
In the golden weather.

XCVI.

I saw you in the gloaming, love,
When all the fleets were homing, love,
And under the large level moon the long grey
seas were combing, love.

I saw you tall and splendid, love,
And all my griefs were ended, love,
When on me, as I put to land, your seaward
eyes were bended, love.

The little boats were stranded, love,
And all their rich bales landed, love;
But all my wealth awaited me low-voiced and
gentle-handed, love.

XCVII.

How unutterably lonely
Is the vast grey round of sea,
Till the yellow flower of heaven
Breaks and blossoms and gets free,
Lighting up the lilac spaces
With her golden density!
Hope of sailors and of lovers,
Swings the lantern of the sea.

Not the moon it was that lighted
One grey waste of heart I know,
Warmed with loving, touched with magic,
And made molten and aglow,
When your beauty flowered above it
From a twilight soft and slow.
Dearest face that still must beacon
Where your lover still must go!

XCVIII.

Do you know the pull of the wind on the sea?
That is the thought of you over my heart,
The long soft breath of the soul drawing back
to me,
From the desolate lone of outer space,
At dead of night when we are apart.

Do you know the sound of the surf on the shore,
At the lilac close of a soft spring day?
That is the fairy music I hear once more,
As I remember your last farewell,
In the blue still night when you are away.

And the wondrous round of the moon on the hill,
When blue dusk covers the rim of the sea?

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

More desired and strange and loved and lovelier
still

Is the vision that comes with love in her eyes —

Your wonderful eyes — forever to me.

XCIX.

The fishers are sailing; the fleet is away;
The rowlocks are throbbing at break of day.

The cables are creaking; the sails are unfurled;
The red sun is over the rim of the world.

The first summer hour is white on the hill;
The sails in the harbour-mouth belly and fill, —

Each boat putting out with the breast of a gull
For the mighty great deep that shall rock them
and lull.

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

There, there, they all pass out of sight one by
one, —

Gleam, dazzle, and sink in the path of the sun, —

The last tiny speck to melt out and be free
As a roseleaf of cloud on the rim of the sea.

C.

My love said, "What is the sea?"
I said, "The unmeasured sea
Is my heart, sweetheart,
That is stormy or still
With its great wild will,
Glorying, stainless and free,
Or sad with a sorrow beyond man's speech to
impart,
But for ever calling to thee,
Heart of my heart."

My love said, "What is the tide?"
I said, "The unshackled tide
Is my love, sweetheart,
The draft and sweep

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

Of the restless deep,
Made clean as the stars and wide,
That forever must yearn to the land above and
 apart,
Till the day when she sinks to his side,
Heart of my heart."

My love said, "What is the land?"
I said, "The Summer land
Is thy face, sweetheart,
Dreamy and warm and glad,
In a benediction clad,
With sunshine sweetened and tanned;
And there is the set of the tide, the end and the
 start,
The sea's despair and demand,
Heart of my heart!"

CI.

The moonlight is a garden
Upon the mountainside,
Wherein your gleaming spirit
All lovely and grave-eyed,

Touched with the happy craving
That will not be denied,
Aforetime used to wander
Until it reached my side.

O wild white forest flower,
Rose-love and lily-pride,
And staunch of burning beauty
Against your lover's side!

CII.

The lily said to the rose,
"What will become of our pride,
When Yvonne comes down the path?"
And the crimson rose replied,

"Our beauty and pride must wane,
Yet we shall endure to stir
The pulse of lovers unborn
With metaphors of her."

CIII.

The white water-lilies, they sleep on the lake,
Till over the mountain the sun bids them wake.

At the rose-tinted touch of the long, level ray,
Each pure, perfect blossom unfolds to the day.

Each affluent petal outstretched and uncurled
To the glory and gladness and shine of the world.

O whiter land-lily, asleep in the dawn,
While yet the cool curtain of stars is half drawn,

And all the dark forest is mystic and still,
With the great yellow planet aglow on the hill,

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

Hark, somewhere among the grey beeches a
thrush

Sends the first thrill of sound to requicken the
hush!

With a flutter of eyelids, a sigh soft and deep,
An unfolding of rosy warm fingers from sleep,

For one perfect day more to love, gladden and
roam,

Thy spirit comes back to its flowerlike home.

CIV.

What are the great stars white and blue,
Sparkling along the twilight there?
They are the dewy gems let fall,
When I loosed your hair.

What is the great pale, languorous moon
On the floor of the sea alone?
That is the yellow rose let fall,
When I loosed your zone.

CV.

What is that spreading light far over the sea,
In the thin cool dawn, in the wash of the summer
air,

When the planets pale
And the soft winds fail,
But Yvonne with her yellow hair?

What is that deep, dark shine in the heart of the
sea,
The glory and glow and darkle and dim
surprise,
Melting and clear
Beyond fathom of fear,
But Yvonne with her smoke-blue eyes?

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

What is that burning disk on the rim of the sea,
When autumn brushfires smoulder and birds go
 South,
When twilight fills
The imperial hills,
But Yvonne with her scarlet mouth?

CVI.

Over the sea is a scarlet cloud,
And over the cloud the sun.
And over my heart is a shining hope,
And over that, Yvonne.

CVII.

What lies across my lonely bed
Like tropic moonlight soft and pale?
What deeper gold is that outspread
Across my pillow like a veil?

What sudden fragrances are these
That voyage across the gloom to me,
With faint delirious ecstasies
From fairy gardens over sea?

What rustles in the curtained dusk
With the remembrance of a sigh,
As if a breath of wandering air
Should stir the poppies going by?

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

Lover of beauty, can it be
That from some far off foreign clime
The sumptuous night has brought to thee
The Rose of Beauty of all time?

CVIII.

Another day comes up,
Wears over, and goes down;
And it seems an age has passed
In a little seaboard town,

To one who must weary and wait
'Till the sun comes round once more,
Before he may tap on the pane
And lift the latch of your door.

CIX.

Three things there be in the world, Yvonne;
And what do you guess they mean?
The stable land, the heaving sea,
And the tide that hangs between.

Three things there be in this life, Yvonne;
And what do you guess they mean?
Your sun-warm soul, my wind-swept soul,
And the current that draws between.

CX.

The first soft green of a Northern spring,
Lit by a golden sun:
That is the little frock you wore
When our love was begun,
In the house by the purple shore.

The gold-red flush of early fall,
And the tinge of sun on the sea:
That is the maiden vest you wore
When you came to my knee,
And the firelight danced on the floor.

CXI.

Now all the twigs and grasses
Are feathery with snow;
The land is white and level,
The brooks have ceased to flow.

No song is in the woodland,
There is no light of sun,
But bright and warm and tender
Is my sweetheart, Yvonne.

The lower hills are purple,
The farther peaks are lost;
There's nothing left alive now,
Except the bitter frost.

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

Yes, two there be that heed not
How cold the year may run:
The fire upon the hearthstone,
And my sweetheart, Yvonne.

CXII.

Our isle is a magic ship;
You can feel it swing and dip,
Running the long blue slopes
Of sliding sea,
With you and me
The only adventurers.

The sails of the snow are spread.
See how we forge ahead!
Good-by, old summers and sorrows!
O brave and dear
Whom never a fear
Of the breathless voyage deters!

CXIII.

The sails of the ship are white, love;
What are they?
The hauling clouds, you say.

The ropes are weather-worn, love;
What are they?
The strands of rain, you say.

The lights ashore are lit, love;
What are they?
The beacon stars, you say.

How shall we keep the course, love,
By night and day?
By a secret chart, you say.

But how shall we reckon true, love,
Without time of day?
By a tick of the heart, you say.

And how shall we know the land, love,
On that day?
You smile and will not say.

CXIV.

Look, where the northern streamers wave and
fold,

Bluish and green and gold,

At the far corner of the quiet land,
Moved by an unseen hand!

Some one has drawn the curtains of the night,
And taken away the light.

It is so still I cannot hear a sound,
Except the mighty bound

Your little heart makes beating in your side,
And the first sob of tide,

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

When the sea turns from ebb far down the shore
To his old task once more.

O surging, stifling heart, have all your will,
In the blue night and still!

Love till the Hand folds up the firmament,
And the last stars are spent!

CXV.

I do not long for fame,
Nor triumph, nor trumpets of praise;
I only wish my name
To endure in the coming days,

When men say, musing at times,
With smiling speech and slow,
"He was a maker of rhymes
Yvonne loved long ago!"

CXVI.

I know how the great and golden sun
Will come up out of the sea,
Stride in to shore
And up to her door,
To touch her hand and her hair,
With so much more than a man can say,
Bidding Yvonne good day.

I know how the great and quiet moon
Will come up out of the sea,
And climb the hill
To her window-sill
And enter all silently,
And lie on her little cot so white,
Kissing Yvonne good night.

I know how the great and countless stars
Will come up out of the sea,
To keep their guard
By her still dooryard,
Lest the soul of Yvonne should stray
And be lost for ever there by the deep,
In the wonderful hills of sleep.

CXVII.

What will the Angel of the Morning say,
Relieving guard?

“Night, who hath passed thy way
To the Palace Yard?”

And Night will make reply,
“Only two springtime lovers sought
The King’s reward.”

Then will the Angel of the Morning say,
“What said the King?”

“The King said nought, but smiled
And took his ring
And gave it to the man,
And set him in his stead for one
Sweet day of spring.”

Then will the Angel of the Morning say,
With grave regard,
“ Pass, Night, and leave the gate
For once unbarred.
I serve the lover now ;
He shall be free of all the earth
For his reward.”

CXVIII.

Along the faint horizon
I watch the first soft green,
And for the first wild warble
Near to the ground I lean.

The flowers come up with colour,
The birds come back with song,
And from the earth are taken
Despondency and wrong.

Yet in the purple shadows,
And in the warm grey rain,
What hints of ancient sorrow
And unremembered pain!

O sob and flush of April,
That still must joy and sing!
What is the sad, wild meaning
Under the heart of Spring?

CXIX.

Once more the golden April;
Gold are the willow-trees,
And golden the soft murmur
Of the gold-belted bees.

All golden is the sunshine,
And golden are the flowers,
The golden-wing makes music
In the long, golden hours.

All dull gold are the marshes
And red gold are the dunes,
And gold the pollen dust is
Moting the quiet noons.

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

Even the sea's great sapphire
Is panelled with raw gold.
How else were spring unperished,
A thousand ages old?

CXX.

Now comes the golden sunlight
Up the glad earth once more,
And every forest dweller
Comes to his open door.

And now the quiet rain-wind
Comes from the soft grey sea,
To haunt thy April lover
With lonely pangs for thee!

CXXI.

In the blue mystery of the April woods,
Thy spirit now
Makes musical the rainbird's interludes,
And pink the peach-tree bough.

In the new birth of all things bright and fair,
'Tis only thou
Art very April, glory, light and air,
And joy and ardour now!

AFTERSONG.

These are the joyous songs
The shy sea children sing,
When the moon goes down the west,
Soft as a pale moth wing;

When the gnat and the bumblebee
In the gauze of sleep are fast,
And a fairy summer dream
Is the only thing will last.

These are the ever-songs
The heart of the sea will sing,
When ash-coloured birds are building,
And lilac thickets ring;

When June is an open road
For every soul that stirs;
When scarlet voices summon,
And not a foot defers.

These are the twilight songs
Out of the simple North,
Where the marchers of the night
In silent troops go forth;

Where Alioth sails and sails
Forever round the pole,
And wonder brings no sad
Disquietude of soul.

And all their bodily beauty
Must flower a moment and die,
As the rain goes down the sea-rim,
The streamers up the sky;

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN

Till time as a falling echo
Shall sift them over and o'er,
And the wind between the stars
Can tell their words no more.

Yet the lyric beat and cry
Which frets the poor frail things
Shall pass from joy to joy
Up through a thousand springs,

Teasing the sullen years
Out of monotony,
As reedbirds pour their rapture
By the unwintered sea.



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d.
only one
day on



